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ABSTRACT

In an effort to find a greater source of motivation and incentive in an activity in which the students would go beyond the textbook to use their foreign language skills, a total immersion German-speaking weekend camping excursion was undertaken at the Mexico Academy and Central School in Mexico, N.Y. The activity was organized by one language teacher and easily accomodated 25 students of all levels; therefore, the program is suitable for schools of all sizes and may be expanded or minimized to meet the needs and aspirations of interested teachers. The main purposes of the weekend were to provide a new impetus for German language learning (and teaching) and to encourage the students to speak as fluently and as often as possible in German. Complete descriptions of location, expenses, grouping, native (or near-native) supervision, guests, activities schedule, menu, post-questionnaires, and conclusions are included here. An adaptation of the Mary Dufort Student Attitude Scale (1962) was developed. The scale determined that the weekend excursion had improved student attitudes toward language and language learning and that student interest and motivation had increased as a direct result of the total immersion experience. (Author/PMP)

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ADDING THE T.I.P. DIMENSION: A CASE FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

The problem of lack of motivation and lack of incentive exists at all school levels and in all school subjects, thus giving educators the prod to develop new curriculum, new methods and new techniques, in hopes of overcoming these vital "deficiencies."

Closely linked to this lack of motivation and incentive is the problem of poor ability to learn to speak a foreign language. In an effort to re-motivate ability and to offer a stimulating out-of-the-classroom experience, a total immersion German-speaking weekend camping excursion was undertaken by approximately 25 Mexico Academy and Central School German students and their teacher.

The total immersion weekend was meant to be an organized educational environment where the students were given the opportunity to hear and to speak German exclusively.

A total immersion program is not a new idea, but by total immersion "program," it is generally meant that a student would be totally immersed in the language for a large part of his school day in a multi-year sequence of full and/or mini-courses taught in the language.

Because Mexico is a small school with only one German teacher already with a full daily load of six classes, such a program within the school day structure would not be feasible. In hopes of coming as close as possible to the basic idea of total immersion, the out-of-the-school weekend program was chosen. That idea did seem to be new, as no information on other total immersion camping trips

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could be found.

Basic assumptions behind the experience were: students learn most thoroughly that which is practiced most extensively, and because the main objective of a meaningful language program is to have students speak as fluently as possible, students enrolled in a foreign language class should be given as much opportunity and incentive as possible to develop the oral competency skill--both in- and out-of-the-classroom. Also, a student's attitudes toward the learning of a subject greatly influence his performance in that subject. If a student's attitudes can be positively motivated, he will strive to perform better, in- and out-of-the-classroom.

The main purposes of the weekend were to put a new spark into German language learning and into the learners themselves; and to encourage the students to speak as fluently, and as often, as possible in German.

It was believed that (1) the weekend could change positively student attitudes toward language and language learning, and (2) that student interest and motivation would increase as a direct result of the total immersion experience.

All students enrolled in a German class were invited to attend. No restrictions were placed as to level or grade. The students and parents were initially explained by letter that those who attended would be expected to use only German and that a contract to that effect would have to be signed before anyone would be accepted. The penalty for English usage would be expulsion from the German-speaking camping community. (No one had to be sent home, however.)

A campgrounds approximately two miles from the school was

selected. The group of participants was isolated in a group area, so that it would not be interrupted by English speakers.

Students were divided into groups comprised of one or more native or near-native speakers and four to six learners. Various athletic and academic competitions were planned between the groups, but the main reason for this kind of organization was to facilitate speaking in German.

The students stayed overnight in sleeping bags and tents and took their meals there, also. Most of the meals were simple and prepared by the students, but some items were prepared by parents and brought in when needed.

The weekend ran from 4 p.m. on Friday, May 31 through 10 a.m. on Sunday, June 2. Each participating student contributed $5.00 toward expenses, plus one salad and one dessert.

Native or near-native guests who served as group leaders consisted of two college freshman majoring in German; a college professor, his native wife and two German-speaking children (preschool aged); a native mother of one of the students; three area German teachers and the native wife of another college German professor. Invitations had been sent earlier to all S.U.C.Oswego German professors and their German-speaking families and also to area county teachers.

A total of seven student guests from two nearby schools were also participants, but are not included in this discussion in the analysis of attitude changes and objectives-met.

The weekend was planned so that at least one organized activity would be running at all times. It was, however, very often found that the students initiated their own activities and several

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ideas were deleted from the program in favor of some other student-initiated ideas.

The original program was set up as follows: (given here in translation)

FRIDAY, MAY 31

4 p.m.	GERMAN SPEAKING BEGINS	
4-6 p.m.	set-up	
6-7 p.m.	cooking, eating and clean-up	
7-9 p.m.	academic competitions a. baffle b. pictorial charades c. many words from one d. what's my line? e. password f. hinky-pinky g. sing-marathon	led by the teachers present
9-10 p.m.	Bonfire a. ghost stories--told by advanced students (assigned beforehand) b. singing c. S'mores	
10 p.m.	GOOD NIGHT	

Saturday, June 1

7:30 a.m.	Get up	
7:30-8:00 a.m.	physical exercises (led by a parent who learned all the commands in German)	
8-9 a.m.	cooking, eating and clean-up	
9-12 a.m.	classes (conducted by M.A.C.S. level 4 and 5, and college students and by teachers present)	
9-10 a.m.	a. stone painting b. leather work and basket weaving c. flower pot hangers	
10-11 a.m.	d. fencing e. dancing f. German geography and customs	

11-12 a.m.	g. singing h. drama (skits) i. tongue-twisters	
12-1 p.m.	cooking, eating and clean-up	
1-3 p.m.	soccer, baseball, volleyball, kickball or hikes with group leaders	
3-4 p.m.	races (innertubes, wheelbarrow, three-legged, etc.) or horseback riding	
4-5 p.m.	games a. the towel is off! b. russian baseball c. teasure hunt d. capture the flag e. twister	led by M.A.C.S. level 4 and 5 students
5-6 p.m.	classes a. singing b. hex signs c. tie-dying d. decoupage	led by M.A.C.S. level 4 and 5 students
6-7 p.m.	cooking, eating, clean-up	
7-8 p.m.	polka-marathon hollywood squares jeopardy the friend game	led by teachers present
8-9 p.m.	hayride and singing	
9-11 p.m.	Bonfire singing rhythym games	
11 p.m.	GOOD NIGHT	

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

8 a.m.	get up
8-9 a.m.	eating
9-10 a.m.	clean-up
10-11 a.m.	GOOD-BYE!

Students were responsible for their own individual sleeping facilities, but food and meals were a group activity. The menu

for the weekend consisted of:

FRIDAY SUPPER

hot dogs with bun/mustard
potato chips
salads
cake
punch

FRIDAY NIGHT SNACK

S'mores (graham crackers, chocolate bars and toasted marshmallows, sandwich-style)

SATURDAY BREAKFAST

juice, coffee, hot chocolate
ham and eggs
donuts

SATURDAY LUNCH

hamburgers with roll/ketchup
potato chips
salads
watermelon
punch

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SNACK

fruits

SATURDAY SUPPER

camping goulasch
noodles
rolls
salads
cake
punch

SATURDAY NIGHT SNACK

popcorn

SUNDAY BREAKFAST

juice, coffee, hot chocolate
ham and eggs
donuts

To ascertain whether or not the student attitudes did in fact change positively, an adaptation of the Mary Dufort Student Attitude

Scale (c. 1962) was developed. The scale was designed such that the students could indicate on the 16 items, if their opinion or attitude had become (1) less (positive) since the weekend, (2) no change because of the weekend, (3) somewhat more (positive) since the weekend or (4) more (positive) since the weekend. Each item was scored on a basis of 1 to 4 points on an ascending scale. The maximum score on the scale was thus 64 and the minimum score was 16. Any score between 16 and 32 would have indicated that the weekend had had either and adverse or no effect on attitudes. Since it was the intent of the excursion to foster a clear gain in positive attitude following the total immersion weekend, a minimum mean score of 48 was hoped for. Any score, 33 or above, would have indicated at least some positive change. The scale was administered two days after the program had been completed. A copy of the scale follows:

This is a questionnaire which will give you an opportunity to express how you feel about your study of German after the total immersion weekend.

Read each statement carefully and put down your first reaction by writing a number from 1 to 4 in the space provided.

Sample: I like Mrs. Thayer for a teacher.
1. less since the weekend
2. no change because of the weekend
3. somewhat more since the weekend
4. more since the weekend

_____1. I like studying German.

_____2. I would like to learn more than one foreign language.

_____3. I like to practice German on my own.

_____4. German is interesting.

_____5. I would like to travel in a country where German is spoken.

_____6. The way German people express themselves is very interesting.

_____7. German is an easy language to learn.

_____8. I would like to be a German teacher.

_____9. I would like to take German again next year.

____10. I would like to know German-speaking people of my own age.

____11. I am glad German is taught in this school.

____12. I like to hear German people talk.

____13. German is an interesting subject.

____14. Sometimes I find that I am thinking in German.

____15. I am glad that I have the opportunity to study German.

____16. I use German outside the classroom.

In addition to effecting a positive attitude change, the teacher was also interested in achieving a set of objectives.

A similar scale was devised so that the students could indicate on 20 items, to what extent each of the objectives had been accomplished by the program: (1) not at all, (2) a little bit, (3) quite a bit and (4) very much. Each of these items was also scored on a basis of 1 to 4 points on an ascending scale. The maximum score on the scale was 80 and the minimum score was 20. Any score above 40 would have indicated that the objectives had been met to some degree, but a mean score at least above 60 was hoped for. This scale was also administered two days after the program had been completed. A copy of the scale follows:

Below is a compilation of what Mrs. Thayer's main objectives for students participating in the total immersion weekend were. Please indicate your opinion as to what extent those objectives were accomplished by you or for you. Use the scale:

1. not at all
2. a little bit
3. quite a bit
4. very much

Answer each question according to how <u>you</u> feel.

____1. I had fun.

____2. I now want to learn more.

____3. I became more involved and active in the language.

____4. I was brought closer together with other students.

____5. I learned something about camping.

____6. German seems more fun.

____7. German seems more interesting.

____8. The weekend helped me with the language.

____9. I speak better.

____10. I speak more.

____11. I have a better understanding of the language.

____12. I assumed responsibility for activities, classes, clean-up or planning.

____13. I am more interested in the language.

____14. The weekend proved that I could really communicate in the language.

____15. I learned new words, phrases and constructions.

____16. I reviewed already-studied words, phrases and constructions.

____17. I began to think in the language.

____18. The weekend created the atmosphere of a "little Germany."

____19. I want to work to plan other varieties of "total immersion programs."

____20. I want to participate in other total immersion programs.

When the scores on the attitude scale were tabulated, it was found that only one score (32) indicated that the weekend had had no effect. Nine scores fell between 33 and 48, indicating some positive change. Fourteen scores fell between 48 and 64, indicating that those students had definitely had a positive attitude change. The mean score was 48.5, indicating that overall, the weekend had, in fact, clearly effected the desired attitude change.

TABLE I

STUDENT SCORES ON ATTITUDE CHANGE SCALE

mean of scores= 48.5

STUDENT NUMBER	SCALE SCORE	SCALE SCORES IN ORDER
1	57	32
2	46	33
3	50	35
4	35	36
5	56	44
6	32	44
7	58	46
8	46	46
9	44	46
10	53	47
11	52	50
12	53	50
13	36	50
14	33	51
15	59	52
16	54	53
17	56	53
18	56	54
19	50	56
20	47	56
21	46	56
22	51	57
23	44	58
24	50	59

After the tabulations on the objectives-scale were made, it was found that none of the 22 scores fell below the 40 mark and that 15 of the scores actually met or surpassed the desired score of 60. The mean score was 61, which indicated that overall, the students felt the teacher's objectives had been met "quite a bit."

TABLE II

STUDENT SCORES ON OBJECTIVES-MET SCALE

mean of scores = 61

STUDENT NUMBER	SCALE SCORE	SCALE SCORES IN ORDER
1	70	not completed
2	44	not completed
3	55	44
4	not completed	45
5	70	47
6	not completed	48
7	76	53
8	65	55
9	60	58
10	61	60
11	61	60
12	62	61
13	47	61
14	67	62
15	70	62
16	65	65
17	62	65
18	48	67
19	60	70
20	45	70
21	53	70
22	71	71
23	71	71
24	58	76

In addition to learning about the overall effects of the weekend, the teacher wanted to study each item on the scales as separate entities.

On the attitude scale, each item could receive up to four points from each of the twenty-four participants for a maximum total score of 96. Items from the questionnaire are organized

below in descending order, from most positive change to least positive change, according to responses from the students. Any score above 48 (all responses above 2) indicated that some positive change had occurred, but a score of 72 or above (all responses 3 and above) indicated a clear and definite positive attitude change.

TABLE III

ORDERED POSITIVE ATTITUDE CHANGES

	SCORE	RESPONSE
3+	84	I am glad German is taught in this school.
	84	I like to hear German people talk.
	82	Sometimes I find that I'm thinking in German.
	81	I would like to travel in a country where German is spoken.
	78	I would like to know German-speaking people of my own age.
	77	I am glad that I have the opportunity to study German.
	76	German is interesting.
	75	German is an interesting subject.
	75	I use German outside the classroom.
	74	I would like to take German again next year.
2+	69	I like to practice German on my own.
	68	I like studying German.
	66	The way German people express themselves is very interesting.
	63	German is an easy language to learn.
	55	I would like to be a German teacher.
	53	I would like to learn more than one foreign language

On the objectives scale, each item could receive up to four points from each of the twenty-two completed papers, for a maximum score of 88. Items from that questionnaire are organized below in descending order, from objectives most effectively met to those least effectively met. Any score above 22 (all responses above 2, that is) indicated that the objective had been met to some extent, but for a clear indication that the objective had been effectively met, a score well above 44 (and preferably above 66) was hoped for.

Only one objective was not met effectively: that the students learned something about camping.

TABLE IV

ORDERED OBJECTIVES-MET

	SCORE	OBJECTIVE
3+	82	I want to participate in other total immersion programs
	79	I had fun.
	76	I want to work to plan other varieties of "total immersion programs."
	75	I began to think in the language.
	75	I now want to learn more.
	74	I am more interested in the language.
	70	German seems more interesting.
	70	German seems more fun.
	69	The weekend helped me with the language.
	67	The weekend proved that I could really communicate in the language.
2+	66	I speak more.
	65	I was brought closer together with other students
	65	I learned new words, phrases and constructions.
	64	The weekend created the atmosphere of a "little Germany."
	63	I have a better understanding of the language.
	62	I became more involved and active in the language.
	61	I speak better.
	60	I reviewed already-studied words, phrases and constructions.
	57	I assumed responsibility for activities, classes, clean-up or planning.
	44	I learned something about camping.

In this study the findings show that the total immersion program, even if it is not a recognized part of the in-school curriculum, can be used as a successful and effective tool (on a part-time or occasional basis) for motivating positive attitude changes among foreign language learners. Students who did participate in the Mexico camping weekend indicated that the weekend had changed positively their attitudes toward their study of German and that their interest and motivation had increased as a direct result of the

total immersion experience. In fact, one level I student was so excited and enthused and motivated after the weekend that he participated to his fullest in class, did his homework faithfully and really worked in class during the last few weeks before finals--he worked so hard, in fact, that he scored a 96 on the final exam (the highest score in his class). This is to be compared with his first three ten-week averages: 90--81--70. This boy had certainly possessed the ability all along, but needed something to motivate him to do his best. The weekend total immersion program did it.

Because there was no baseline data with which to correlate the post-questionnaire results, the success fof the weekend overall must be logically induced from the student responses. (This is one way this project could be changed to allow for a definite and formal research design.) Nothing here has been statistically proven, but rather, the gut-level impression and attitude changes caused by the T.I.P. weekend have been indicated. But the value of the weekend has been clearly established through the student responses--enough such that his teacher will be planning many more programs in the future. The program need not be an entire weekend long--perhaps an afternoon swim party, or an evening meal at a student's or the teacher's home. Whatever causes the students to get together and talk is sufficient for an extra-curricular T.I.P. plan.

I have long since given up the idea of setting the world on fire from my classroom pulpit; in fact, I've come to feel that if I motivate or even move <u>one</u> student a little bit because of my efforts, I've been successful. But this program certainly did more

than just that--it was the biggest pat on the back I've gotten in my five years of teacheng in Mexico--and I've tried many things to motivate students.

The program worked both ways, however. My attitude in the classroom has definitely become more positive, too. I'm much more excited and energetic now than I had been in the few months of the spring semester before the weekend. It gave me that booster shot in the arm that I needed to cure the doldrums of the everyday classroom routine. That, too, made all the time, planning and work worth it all. If you're looking for something to spark up your students, your classroom routine, your enthusiasm--why not try adding the T.I.P. dimension to your curriculum?

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